

message be the default disposition after the message has been opened. That is, the recipient must manually save desired messages, unlike the conventional approach in which recipients must manually delete undesired messages.

Detailed Description Text (34):

Unlike previous email systems, chat rooms, and other conventional messaging systems, the present invention thus gives email message originators 200 and/or major service providers such as America Online both the opportunity and the presumed burden of marking for removal at least some of the messages 206 they originate or distribute. In conventional email systems, by contrast, recipients are burdened with removing essentially all unwanted messages. The invention promotes efficiency by having the originator 200 and/or distributor 222, who know the message contents 212 and their intended effect, mark the messages 206 for removal after their arrival. This is better than making one or many recipients, who did not necessarily ask to receive the message, attend to its disposal.

Detailed Description Text (38):

For instance, distributors 222 may verify that email messages 206 from a given originator 200 contain agreed-upon removal indicators 210. In particular, for the convenience of advertising message recipients, a distributor 222 may grant use of a member list of email addresses for limited advertising purposes on condition that the emailed advertisements contain indicators 210 which will cause them to be automatically removed. The distributor 222 may then check some or all of the messages 206 to verify compliance with that contractual requirement.

Detailed Description Text (51):

In one embodiment, self-removing email messages 206 contain advertisements of any of a broad range of services and goods which are presently described in unsolicited mass-mailing emails, in website banner ads, in television or radio spots, in newspapers and magazines, and in other forms and media. In one embodiment, they contain news items which are mailed to subscribers who voluntarily provided their email addresses for that purpose. Unlike television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, ads and news sent through the Internet and other electronic media can be relatively inexpensive, targeted, interactive, and/or provide hot links to web sites, newsgroups, IRC channels, and other digital network resources. Like unsolicited emails and banner ads, the messages 206 can be animated, with audio and/or visual components, and hot links. Unlike unsolicited emails and some banner ads, the self-removing message files 206 of the present invention do not require that recipients 202 affirmatively remove unwanted ads or old news from their computer system disk or create a reply message having REMOVE in the subject, to indicate their lack of interest in the subject matter being advertised, to conserve space, and/or to reduce clutter in their inbox.

Detailed Description Text (63):

In alternative embodiments, the method does not place the self-removal enhancement in the same message as the content 212 that is thus made subject to removal. Instead, the method may associate message content 212 with a self-removal enhancement by placing the enhancement in an email message 206 which identifies a separate message, if the content 212 is provided in the separate message. That is, the association may be made by sending the email message contents 212 in one partial transmission 218 to the recipient 202 and sending the self-removal enhancement in a separate partial transmission 218 (before or after the content 212 is sent), and by ensuring that the enhancement portion of the transmission 218 permits identification of the intended content 212. For instance, an ISP 222 may transmit to its member email tools 226 an instruction which indicates that any subsequent message from an email address specified in the instruction should be subject to automatic removal one day after being opened, and that the recipient should be warned of this when such a message is opened.

Detailed Description Text (70):

At the recipient 202 (e.g., at the recipient's mail server and/or at the recipient's laptop, wireless device, or other workstation), removal code 208 checks incoming messages to determine whether they contain any self-removing message indicators 210 from message originators 200 and/or message distributors 222. The removal code 208 then automatically notifies the recipient 202, removes messages 206, and otherwise proceeds in response to such indicators 210 with each message 206 which contains or is otherwise associated with an indicator 210. Note that deletion instructions provided by the recipient 202 are not indicators 210, since they do not give originators 200 and/or distributors 222 responsibility for, and initial control over, removal of messages at the recipient's location.

Detailed Description Text (75):

In some embodiments, a reply email (self-removing or not) is sent 236 automatically to the sender 200 when the recipient 202 has opened the self-removing email message 206. In some cases, the possibility of a reply is an explicit option presented to the user 200 or 202; in some of these cases, the options presented include one to send 236 a reply asking that the recipient 202 be removed from the mailing list. This allows the recipient 202 to request removal by doing little or nothing more than opening the unsolicited message 206 and clicking on a "REMOVE FROM MAILING LIST" box or button. In some embodiments, the recipient 202 is given the option of inserting text or other digital material in the reply.

Detailed Description Text (80):

Tools and techniques familiar to those of skill in the art for self-modifying code and/or self-deleting programs such as self-deleting scripts or self-deleting installers may be helpful during implementation of particular embodiments of the invention. Likewise, techniques used in Trojan horses, worms, viruses, and other programs which hide and/or propagate themselves may be modified for use in inventive email message files 206 which destroy themselves after displaying the message they carry. For instance, tools and techniques such as those employed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,623,600 may be adapted for use in the present invention.

Detailed Description Text (97):

In summary, the present invention provides a novel way to protect confidential and proprietary email message contents without substantially reducing the ease and convenience of email transmission. In fact, the ease of use for email recipients is increased, because they no longer need to imprecisely filter or manually remove unsolicited notices or advertisements. Message originators also have more control over the persistence of their messages after the messages are sent, even if messages have been opened. ISPs and other distributors can verify and/or insert self-removal instructions to make sure that directed mailings to their members comply with automatic removal requirements.

Detailed Description Text (98):

Increased security is achieved, for instance, when email messages are embedded in executable files, each of which displays its particular message once and then permanently deletes itself and any copies of itself it can find. The message files may be embodied in computer storage media or (while in transit) in network connections.

Other Reference Publication (8):

Disappearing Inc. Keeps Email Messages Private, pp. 1-3; Oct. 8, 1999.

CLAIMS:

1. A method for using self-removing email messages to shift the burden of message removal from a message recipient to at least one of a message originator and a message distributor, the method comprising the steps of: associating message content with at least one self-removing message indicator to provide at least one of a message originator and a message distributor with initial control over the deletion of a recipient copy of the message content after it reaches the recipient; and transmitting the message content and the self-removing message indicator toward the recipient in at least one email message; wherein the self-removing message indicator indicates that the message is to be deleted automatically in response to a condition involving a replacement message.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the associating step associates message content with a self-removing message indicator by placing the indicator in an email message with the content.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the associating step associates message content with a self-removing message indicator by placing the indicator in an email message which identifies a separate message and the content is provided in the separate message.

17. A method for removing email messages from a recipient's location in response to an instruction from a message originator, the method comprising the steps of: checking an email message at the recipient's location to determine whether it contains a self-removing message indicator from the message originator indicating that the message is to be deleted automatically in response to a condition involving a replacement message; and automatically

removing the email message in response to the indicator if the message contains the indicator.

21. In a computer system, an improvement for using self-removing email messages to shift the burden of message removal from a message recipient to at least one of a message originator and a message distributor, the improvement comprising at least one self-removal enhancement which is associated with message content by at least one of a message originator and a message distributor, the self-removal enhancement specifying a condition for automatic removal of a copy of the message content from a recipient's location in response to a condition involving a replacement message.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the self-removal enhancement comprises a removal indicator placed in an email message.

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☐ 1. Document ID: US 6757713 B1

Using default format because multiple data bases are involved.

L3: Entry 1 of 4

File: USPT

Jun 29, 2004

US-PAT-NO: 6757713

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6757713 B1

TITLE: Method for including a self-removing indicator in a self-removing message

DATE-ISSUED: June 29, 2004

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Ogilvie; John W. L.	Salt Lake City	UT	84105	
Ogilvie; Genie L.	Salt Lake City	UT	84105	

US-CL-CURRENT: 709/206; 709/202

Full	Title	Citation	Front	Review	Classification	Date	Reference	Abstract	Claims	KWIC	Draw Desc	Image
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☐ 2. Document ID: US 6701347 B1

L3: Entry 2 of 4

File: USPT

Mar 2, 2004

US-PAT-NO: 6701347

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6701347 B1

TITLE: Method for including a self-removing code in a self-removing email message that contains an advertisement

DATE-ISSUED: March 2, 2004

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
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APPL-NO: 09/ 619933 [PALM]

DATE FILED: July 20, 2000

PARENT-CASE:

RELATED APPLICATIONS This application is a continuation-in-part of commonly owned copending application Ser. No. 09/399,066 filed Sep. 18, 1999, through which this application also claims priority to application Ser. No. 60/101,517 filed Sep. 23, 1998 and to application Ser. No. 60/104,138 filed Oct. 14, 1998.

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US-CL-ISSUED: 709/206; 709/202
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FIELD-OF-SEARCH: 709/206, 709/207, 709/200, 709/249, 709/202, 707/10, 345/333, 455/415, 714/748

PRIOR-ART-DISCLOSED:

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ART-UNIT: 2141

PRIMARY-EXAMINER: Luu; Le Hien

ATTY-AGENT-FIRM: Computer Law ++

ABSTRACT:

Methods, articles, signals, and systems are provided for providing unsolicited email message originators with default control over message removal at a message recipient's location, regardless of whether the unsolicited message has been opened. For instance, a self-removing message is designated as such by the message's originator, and a self-removal enhancement is added to conventional message content such as advertising before the message is transmitted over a computer network toward recipients. At a given recipient's location, the message is automatically deleted without additional effort by the recipient, before or after being displayed, according to the originator's instructions unless they are overridden by the recipient. Thus, the burden of removing unsolicited email messages is transferred from recipients to the message's originators.

22 Claims, 3 Drawing figures

Full	Title	Citation	Front	Review	Classification	Date	Reference	Drawings	Claims	KWIC	Draw Desc	Image
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☐ 3. Document ID: US 6487586 B2

L3: Entry 3 of 4

File: USPT

Nov 26, 2002

US-PAT-NO: 6487586

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6487586 B2

TITLE: Self-removing email verified or designated as such by a message distributor for the convenience of a recipient

DATE-ISSUED: November 26, 2002

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

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Ogilvie; Genie L.	Salt Lake City	UT	84105	

APPL-NO: 09/ 928954 [PALM]

DATE FILED: August 13, 2001

PARENT-CASE:

RELATED APPLICATIONS This application is a division of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/618,249 filed Jul. 18, 2000. This application is a continuation-in-part of commonly owned copending application Ser. No. 09/399,066 filed Sep. 18, 1999, through which this application also claims priority to application Ser. No. 60/101,517 filed Sep. 23, 1998 and to application Ser. No. 60/104,138 filed Oct. 14, 1998.

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US-CL-ISSUED: 709/206; 709/207, 709/201, 709/220

US-CL-CURRENT: 709/206; 709/201, 709/207, 709/220

FIELD-OF-SEARCH: 709/206, 709/207, 709/203, 709/201, 709/220

PRIOR-ART-DISCLOSED:

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Sibling Application Claims (claims of concurrently filed sibling application; aside from their

claims, the two applications are substantially the same).

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Preliminary Amendment to Parent Application (claims of application 1384.2.6B: 09/399,066 filed Sep. 18, 1999).

ART-UNIT: 2152

PRIMARY-EXAMINER: Geckil; Mehmet B.

ATTY-AGENT-FIRM: Computer Law++

ABSTRACT:

Methods, articles, signals, and systems are provided for providing email message originators and distributors with default control over message removal at a message recipient's location, regardless of whether the message has been opened. For instance, a self-removing message is designated as such by the message's originator, and a self-removal enhancement is added to conventional message content before the message is transmitted over a computer network toward one or more recipients. At the recipient's location, the message is automatically deleted without additional effort by the recipient, before or after being displayed, according to the originator's instructions unless they are overridden by the recipient. ISPs and other message distributors may identify messages that should be self-removing, and make them self-removing if they are not. Thus, the burden of removing unsolicited email messages is transferred from recipients to the system and the message's originators and/or to ISPs and other email distributors. Security of messages may also be enhanced.

21 Claims, 3 Drawing figures

Full	Title	Citation	Front	Review	Classification	Date	Reference	Abstract	Claims	KWC	Draw Desc	Image
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☐ 4. Document ID: US 6324569 B1

L3: Entry 4 of 4

File: USPT

Nov 27, 2001

US-PAT-NO: 6324569

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6324569 B1

TITLE: Self-removing email verified or designated as such by a message distributor for the convenience of a recipient

DATE-ISSUED: November 27, 2001

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Ogilvie; John W. L.	Salt Lake City	UT	84105	

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APPL-NO: 09/ 618249 [PALM]

DATE FILED: July 18, 2000

PARENT-CASE:

RELATED APPLICATIONS This application is a continuation-in-part of commonly owned copending application Ser. No. 09/399,066 filed Sep. 18, 1999, through which this application also claims priority to application Ser. No. 60/101,517 filed Sep. 23, 1998 and to application Ser. No. 60/104,138 filed Oct. 14, 1998.

INT-CL: [07] G06 F 15/16

US-CL-ISSUED: 709/206; 709/207, 707/500

US-CL-CURRENT: 709/206; 709/207, 715/500

FIELD-OF-SEARCH: 709/206, 709/207, 709/203, 709/217, 709/224, 709/227, 709/249, 379/93.24, 379/93.25, 345/752, 707/500, 706/47, 713/153

PRIOR-ART-DISCLOSED:

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Sibling Application Claims (claims of concurrently filed sibling application; aside from their claims, the two applications are substantially the same).
Other Application Claims (claims of application 1384.2.6G: 09/619,933 filed Jul. 20, 2000).
E-Mail Goes Postal, Wall Street Journal, B1, Jul. 31, 2000.
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Preliminary Amendment to Parent Application (claims of application 1384.2.6B: 09/399,066 filed Sep. 18, 1999).
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ART-UNIT: 212

PRIMARY-EXAMINER: Geckil; Mehmet B.

ATTY-AGENT-FIRM: Computer Law.sup.++

ABSTRACT:

Methods, articles, signals, and systems are provided for providing email message originators and distributors with default control over message removal at a message recipient's location, regardless of whether the message has been opened. For instance, a self-removing message is designated as such by the message's originator, and a self-removal enhancement is added to conventional message content before the message is transmitted over a computer network toward one or more recipients. At the recipient's location, the message is automatically deleted without additional effort by the recipient, before or after being displayed, according to the originator's instructions unless they are overridden by the recipient. ISPs and other message distributors may identify messages that should be self-removing, and make them self-removing if they are not. Thus, the burden of removing unsolicited email messages is transferred from recipients to the system and the message's originators and/or to ISPs and other email

distributors. Security of messages may also be enhanced.

18 Claims, 3 Drawing figures

Full	Title	Citation	Front	Review	Classification	Date	Reference	Pat. No.	Pub. No.	Claims	KWC	Draw. Desc	Image
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Clear	Generate Collection	Print	Fwd Refs	Bkwd Refs	Generate OACS
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Term	Documents
RECIPIENT	79650
RECIPIENTS	25361
NOTIFS	0
NOTIF	159
NOTIFACATION	1
NOTIFACTION	2
NOTIFAIFIVR	1
NOTIFAING	1
NOTIFAL	1
NOTIFALL	1
NOTIFALLLINKS	1
(L2 AND (NOTIFS NEAR RECIPIENT)).PGPB,USPT,USOC,EPAB,JPAB,DWPI,TDBD.	4

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L3: Entry 1 of 4

File: USPT

Jun 29, 2004

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6757713 B1

TITLE: Method for including a self-removing indicator in a self-removing message

Abstract Text (1):

Methods, articles, signals, and systems are provided for providing email message originators and distributors with default control over message removal at a message recipient's location, regardless of whether the message has been opened. For instance, a self-removing message is designated as such by the message's originator, and a self-removal enhancement is added to conventional message content before the message is transmitted over a computer network toward one or more recipients. At the recipient's location, the message is automatically deleted without additional effort by the recipient, before or after being displayed, according to the originator's instructions unless they are overridden by the recipient. Messages may be automatically deleted in response to the arrival of a replacement message. Thus, the burden of removing unsolicited email messages is transferred from recipients to the system and the message's originators and/or to ISPs and other email distributors. Security of messages may also be enhanced.

Brief Summary Text (5):

Email creates annoyances which have not been fully addressed. One common source of annoyance is "spam" email, namely, unsolicited email sent to multiple recipients. Unlike passive advertising, such as pop-up and banner ads on websites, and ads in more traditional print, radio, or television media, "spam" email seeks out its audience, and thrusts itself into the viewer's field of attention without being invited. This can be very annoying because it interrupts other activities, consumes system resources, and perhaps most importantly, requires active efforts by recipients who want to dispose of these unwanted messages. An email recipient may delete unwanted messages manually by using an email Delete command in an email client (e.g., a desktop application program, or web mail pages in a web browser), by dragging the messages in question to a trash can, or by similar steps.

Brief Summary Text (6):

Some email systems provide filters that detect at least some incoming unsolicited email and either deletes it or, more typically, places it in a directory or folder reserved for such messages. But filters sometimes err, either by characterizing as unsolicited email a message that is not, or by failing to detect unsolicited email and letting it through with the normal correspondence from familiar senders. Thus, it would be helpful to provide some alternate or additional means for disposing of unsolicited email.

Brief Summary Text (7):

Some unsolicited email includes a statement that sending a reply with "REMOVE" in the subject field will remove the recipient from the mailing list. It has been alleged, however, that any reply to some such unsolicited email will simply confirm that the address to which the unsolicited mail was sent is "good" (meaning someone actually looked at the unsolicited email) and that a reply asking to be removed from the mailing list may therefore have an effect opposite from the intended effect. If this is so, then only addresses from which no reply is received would have a chance of being removed from the list.

Brief Summary Text (10):

Accordingly, it would be an advancement to provide an improved approach to email and similar messaging which moves the email message disposal burden off the shoulders of the recipient. In particular and without limitation, it would be an advance to make public notices and news sent through email less onerous to recipients, and likewise to make email advertisements (including without limitation coupons, contact information, descriptions of goods and/or services, comparisons, and promotional materials) available to multiple recipients without requiring that

recipients affirmatively remove unwanted advertisements from their computer systems or create a reply message having REMOVE or another keyword in the subject, to indicate their lack of interest in the subject matter being advertised.

Brief Summary Text (13):

The present invention relates to methods, articles, signals, and systems for self-removing email messages. Self-removal of email (or other transmitted digital information presentations) can provide at least two advantages. First, self-removing email can be used to enhance the security of a system by reducing the number of message copies and the life span of those copies. Second, self-removing email can be used to reduce the inconvenience of unsolicited email by making it possible for officials, advertisers, and other broadcast email originators to present messages that do not have to be manually removed by the target audience. A given method, article, signal, or system may use self-removing email to enhance message security, to reduce recipient annoyance, or both.

Brief Summary Text (14):

In some embodiments, self-removing email messages are encrypted with conventional tools and techniques. To further enhance security, a message is closely coupled to executable code which reduces the number of copies of the message. Some versions of the code allow any given copy of the message to be viewed at most once.

Brief Summary Text (15):

In some embodiments, self-removing email messages contain advertisements, but the invention may also be used to broadcast or otherwise transmit self-removing email messages which contain other materials that, at least by default, are not stored long-term on the recipient's hard disk or on other intervening nodes (the self-removal action may sometimes be expressly overridden). For instance, news items, confidential materials, and other materials directed to a limited audience such as public notices (changes in the law, election results, tax auction notices, public hearing announcements, and so on), private club notices, and materials intended for mature audiences, may also be transmitted in self-removing email messages.

Detailed Description Text (4):

The invention may be used to protect and/or ultimately remove email messages from an individual computer or from one or more computers in a network, including copies of messages stored on removable media or transmitted over a network link and stored on intermediate nodes. FIG. 1 illustrates a system 100 having several computers and several networks 102, 104, 116 which can be configured according to the invention, but those of skill in the art will understand that suitable computer networks include various networks, such as local area networks, wide area networks, metropolitan area networks, and/or various "Internet" or IP networks such as the World Wide Web, a private Internet, a secure Internet, a value-added network, a virtual private network, an extranet, or an intranet.

Detailed Description Text (8):

At least one of the computers 106 is capable of using a floppy drive, tape drive, optical drive, magneto-optical drive, or other means to read a storage medium 120. A suitable storage medium 120 includes a magnetic, optical, or other computer-readable storage device having a specific physical configuration. Suitable storage devices include floppy disks, hard disks, tape, CD-ROMs, PROMs, random access memory, flash memory, and other computer system storage devices. The physical configuration represents data and instructions which cause the computer system to operate in a specific and predefined manner as described herein. Thus, the medium 120 tangibly embodies a program, functions, and/or instructions that are executable by computer(s) to protect and/or delete email message contents substantially as described herein.

Detailed Description Text (15):

In these presently preferred embodiments, self-removal indicators 210 in a given email message 206 permit the originator 200 and/or an intermediate node 220 to indicate to the removal code 208 one or more of the following options:

Detailed Description Text (29):

Note that actions somewhat like these may be taken by a recipient, without any express removal indicator 210 in an email message. For instance, a recipient's email client 226 could be configured to automatically delete any message which remains unopened for more than one week. Likewise, a recipient's email client 226 could be configured to make automatic deletion of a

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Generate Collection

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L3: Entry 1 of 1

File: USPT

Nov 27, 2001

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6324569 B1

TITLE: Self-removing email verified or designated as such by a message distributor for the convenience of a recipient

Abstract Text (1):

Methods, articles, signals, and systems are provided for providing email message originators and distributors with default control over message removal at a message recipient's location, regardless of whether the message has been opened. For instance, a self-removing message is designated as such by the message's originator, and a self-removal enhancement is added to conventional message content before the message is transmitted over a computer network toward one or more recipients. At the recipient's location, the message is automatically deleted without additional effort by the recipient, before or after being displayed, according to the originator's instructions unless they are overridden by the recipient. ISPs and other message distributors may identify messages that should be self-removing, and make them self-removing if they are not. Thus, the burden of removing unsolicited email messages is transferred from recipients to the system and the message's originators and/or to ISPs and other email distributors. Security of messages may also be enhanced.

Brief Summary Text (5):

Email creates annoyances which have not been fully addressed. One common source of annoyance is "spam" email, namely, unsolicited email sent to multiple recipients. Unlike passive advertising, such as pop-up and banner ads on websites, and ads in more traditional print, radio, or television media, "spam" email seeks out its audience, and thrusts itself into the viewer's field of attention without being invited. This can be very annoying because it interrupts other activities, consumes system resources, and perhaps most importantly, requires active efforts by recipients who want to dispose of these unwanted messages. An email recipient may delete unwanted messages manually by using an email Delete command in an email client (c.g., a desktop application program, or web mail pages in a web browser), by dragging the messages in question to a trash can, or by similar steps.

Brief Summary Text (6):

Some email systems provide filters that detect at least some incoming unsolicited email and either deletes it or, more typically, places it in a directory or folder reserved for such messages. But filters sometimes err, either by characterizing as unsolicited email a message that is not, or by failing to detect unsolicited email and letting it through with the normal correspondence from familiar senders. Thus, it would be helpful to provide some alternate or additional means for disposing of unsolicited email.

Brief Summary Text (7):

Some unsolicited email includes a statement that sending a reply with "REMOVE" in the subject field will remove the recipient from the mailing list. It has been alleged, however, that any reply to some such unsolicited email will simply confirm that the address to which the unsolicited mail was sent is "good" (meaning someone actually looked at the unsolicited email) and that a reply asking to be removed from the mailing list may therefore have an effect opposite from the intended effect. If this is so, then only addresses from which no reply is received would have a chance of being removed from the list.

Brief Summary Text (13):

The present invention relates to methods, articles, signals, and systems for self-removing email messages. Self-removal of email (or other transmitted digital information presentations) can provide at least two advantages. First, self-removing email can be used to enhance the security of a system by reducing the number of message copies and the life span of those

copies. Second, self-removing email can be used to reduce the inconvenience of unsolicited email by making it possible for officials, advertisers, and other broadcast email originators to present messages that do not have to be manually removed by the target audience. A given method, article, signal, or system may use self-removing email to enhance message security, to reduce recipient annoyance, or both.

Detailed Description Text (51):

In one embodiment, self-removing email messages 206 contain advertisements of any of a broad range of services and goods which are presently described in unsolicited mass-mailing emails, in website banner ads, in television or radio spots, in newspapers and magazines, and in other forms and media. In one embodiment, they contain news items which are mailed to subscribers who voluntarily provided their email addresses for that purpose. Unlike television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, ads and news sent through the Internet and other electronic media can be relatively inexpensive, targeted, interactive, and/or provide hot links to web sites, newsgroups, IRC channels, and other digital network resources. Like unsolicited emails and banner ads, the messages 206 can be animated, with audio and/or visual components, and hot links. Unlike unsolicited emails and some banner ads, the self-removing message files 206 of the present invention do not require that recipients 202 affirmatively remove unwanted ads or old news from their computer system disk or create a reply message having REMOVE in the subject, to indicate their lack of interest in the subject matter being advertised, to conserve space, and/or to reduce clutter in their inbox.

Detailed Description Text (70):

At the recipient 202 (e.g., at the recipient's mail server and/or at the recipient's laptop, wireless device, or other workstation), removal code 208 checks incoming messages to determine whether they contain any self-removing message indicators 210 from message originators 200 and/or message distributors 222. The removal code 208 then automatically notifies the recipient 202, removes messages 206, and otherwise proceeds in response to such indicators 210 with each message 206 which contains or is otherwise associated with an indicator 210. Note that deletion instructions provided by the recipient 202 are not indicators 210, since they do not give originators 200 and/or distributors 222 responsibility for, and initial control over, removal of messages at the recipient's location.

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